

Calm Down, Fellas ...
Renée Zellweger goes
from girl next door to
voluptuous vixen in
"Chicago" — but she
does it with class. Take
that, Aguilera!

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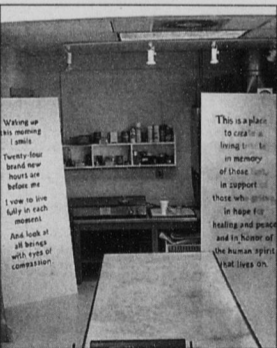


Artistic Community

After receiving a continuation on funding in December, Arts Carolina looks toward growth in the future



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARTS CAROLINA



For a program that is already well-established and almost universally praised, Arts Carolina is operating in a state of continued limbo.

The program has just completed its three-year initiative, and during that time it can lay claim to organizing several festivals, publicizing hundreds of arts events through its Web site and periodical, leading an artistic campus response to Sept. 11, and being the target of a glowing evaluation.

By BROOK CORWIN
Staff Writer

But those credits don't necessarily add up to permanent future funding.

And not knowing the financial state of the program after this semester has made coordinating future events a trying task for Arts Carolina Director Amy Brannock.

"It makes it impossible to plan because we're always a step behind in this budget situation," Brannock said. "It's impossible to plan when we don't know ahead of time how much money we'll have."

Budget uncertainty is a new concern for Arts Carolina. The program originally was funded through its three-year pilot, which provided about \$120,000 a year.

That pilot expired with the 2002 calendar year, forcing a scramble for permanent funding.

But thanks in large part to the recommendation of a task force charged with evaluating the program last semester, Arts Carolina won't be scaling back for at least one more semester.

The task force's report, which surveyed members of the campus community, heavily praised Arts Carolina for reinforcing the arts at UNC.

"The Arts Carolina evaluation committee recommends in the strongest possible terms that Arts Carolina not only be continued, but that it receive reliable, permanent and, when possible, increased funding, primarily from central University sources," the report states.

After reviewing the report, several areas of the University agreed to fund Arts Carolina for the spring 2003 semester, said Darryl Gless, a senior associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences and the chairman of the task force. They include the College of Arts and Sciences, the Office of the Provost and the departments of Art, English, Music and Dramatic Art.

That combined funding will allow Arts Carolina to operate status quo.

That's enough to allow Arts Carolina to continue publicizing and marketing arts events at UNC through its Web site, online calendar and biannual publication. Brannock said the funds also will be able to cover a series of public arts seminars, a UNC presence at the Apple Chill town festival and a possible "performance

for humanity" involving several academic departments in the event that the United States goes to war with Iraq.

But after May, there are no such guarantees. Gless said the possibility of future funding rests heavily on the outlook of the state budget in the spring.

The state budget deficit is projected to be about \$2 billion, and a similarly sized deficit last year forced all UNC departments to cut their budgets.

"Based on the evaluation, there's no doubt of Arts Carolina's value," Gless said. "A lot depends on the state budget outlook. We're kind of hanging by the fire of that."

Gless said a student fee increase for the College of Arts and Sciences is being explored as a possible source of permanent funding for Arts Carolina, a possibility he said is a viable option because Arts Carolina provides students with free or reduced rate tickets for arts events at UNC. Gless said the college is planning to make a request for such an increase to the Student Fee Audit Committee this spring.

Student Body President Jen Daum, who serves as co-chairwoman of the committee, said getting that request approved relies heavily on the opinion of the committee's four student members.

"Student views are honored," Daum said. "We're a voting committee that doesn't vote but instead operates on consensus."

Even if a student fee increase is approved by the committee, Daum said it then must be approved by the UNC Board of Trustees and will not be implemented until two years later.

In the meantime, Brannock said she has to wait before moving forward on her long-term plans for Arts Carolina. Those plans include coordinating a series of summer arts camps offered by the University, organizing a yearly campus arts festival and beginning to implement

the public art planning initiative approved last year.

Brannock said meeting most of these goals, as well as coordinating another disaster response effort like the Sept. 11 memorial wall and subsequent spiral of life, will require an increase in funding for Arts Carolina. Brannock said the program's day-to-day publicity and marketing work would be hindered severely by any cuts to its previous funding.

"We are on a bare-bones budget," Brannock said. "I don't know what we could cut and still be viable."

And after three years of making the arts a more notable presence on the UNC campus, Brannock said eliminating the program would have a detrimental effect on awareness and attendance of arts events at UNC.

"The arts would become invisible again," Brannock said.

"A small handful of people already connected to the arts would seek out the arts and find them, but it would be much less accessible and much harder for new students and faculty to get plugged in."

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ABOVE: Arts Carolina's ongoing support of programs, such as the UNC Jazz Festival, has allowed programs to grow and expand.

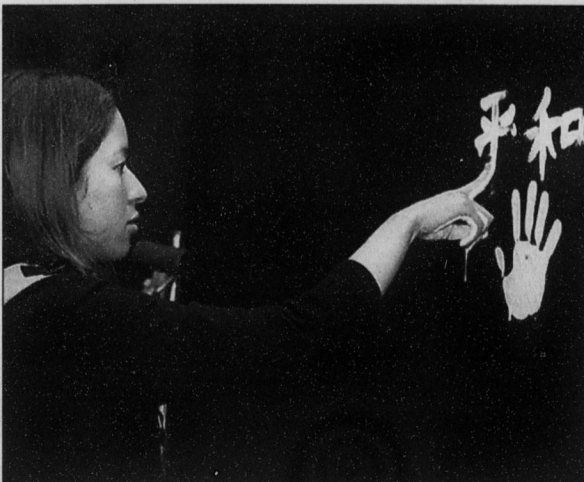
FAR LEFT: Arts Carolina brought together the efforts of different departments to react to Sept. 11.

BELOW: Amy Brannock, director of Arts Carolina, stays busy in her unique position.



DTH FILE PHOTO

Program Brings Together Many Facets of Arts Community



DTH FILE PHOTO

Students, faculty and community members expressed their personal feelings with handprints, poetry and symbols on the Sept. 11 tribute wall, which was erected in Polk Place in 2001, a few days after the attacks.

Through the Arts Carolina link on UNC's home page, you can instantaneously check the dates of that Lab! Theatre show that intrigued you or the time for Tift Merritt's performance at the Student Union.

Three years ago, no such comprehensive collator existed at UNC to bind together the various campus and community arts organizations. To search for theatrical or musical performances required minute scouring of newspaper ads. To learn about new exhibitions sometimes meant physical visits to the galleries.

And now the entire Chapel Hill arts palette rests a few keystrokes away.

"Arts Carolina has given a central portal to increased attention to what's going on on campus," said Andy Berner, director of communications at Ackland Art Museum.

According to Arts Carolina Director Amy Brannock, initial interest in a central arts publicity machine germinated from late Chancellor Michael Hooker's report on the University's intellectual climate. Parts of the report stressed non-traditional avenues of learning such as

attending exhibitions, concerts and performances.

Former Vice Provost Tom Meyer then brought together campus "arts folks" to discuss their needs and challenges.

As they explored the arts as an integral part of UNC's community, they recalled renowned arts alumni such as Thomas Wolfe, Charles Kuralt and Doris Betts and determined that the arts at Chapel Hill deserved a visibility worthy of its predecessors.

Such a penetrating presence demanded increased collaboration among departments and the inclusion of town and state arts organizations. Once the newborn Arts Carolina had secured financial resources and office space, the university hired Brannock to wield the conductor's wand.

The three-year pilot program officially opened in January 2000.

As it began, Arts Carolina continued to operate largely through collaboration and cooperation across departments. Brannock said she does 50 percent of her work in meetings with professors and administrators.

"(Arts Carolina) put us in contact with other departments on campus and has given us an opportunity to collaborate," said Carrie Anne Spinelli, community relations coordinator at Morehead Planetarium.

Outside of the conference room, Arts Carolina fueled the campuswide collaboration on the Sept. 11 tribute wall in 2001.

"It was not something we could have anticipated in that we would fulfill that need in that way," Brannock said. "We didn't plan for it at all, but when it happened it just felt like the natural thing to do."

Brannock and company coordinated students from the Carolina Union Activities Board, the Campus Y and dramatic arts, among others, while assisting them in the conception, publicity, design, construction and execution of an artistic response.

More regularly, Arts Carolina encourages campus collaboration through its continued support of the Carolina Jazz Festival.

"I used the momentum of my office and the desire among departments to

collaborate to make the event even bigger than it was originally planned," Brannock said. "I was the energy to bring people to the table to discuss what their role would be."

Brannock's energy cemented Arts Carolina's role as the central arts locator when she won an arts link on UNC's home page.

"The arts programs at UNC were very disjointed with no communication," she said. "The Web designers could eventually see that it was valuable to have Arts Carolina on the home page."

Dozens of campus, community, state and even national arts organizations are linked to the Arts Carolina Web site, <http://www.artscarolina.org>, from course departments to the National Endowment for the Arts.

Dozens more events appear not only on the Web site but in Arts Carolina's biannual publication, the Arts Carolina Preview, and on the UNC campus calendar. Arts Carolina also maintains an arts infoline at 843-ARTS.

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